

Aqīdah Lessons

THE THIRD NULLIFIER
AND MISCONCEPTIONS CLEARED

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TAKEN FROM

Books archived in Dawlah Islāmiyyah

(ENGLISH VERSION)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Praise be to Allah, the protector of the righteous. Blessings and peace be upon the best of the messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions, with the best, most complete prayers and peace.

The matter of one who does not takfeer against a disbeliever, or doubts their kufr, requires a clear understanding of this rule before passing judgement on individuals characterised by it. This involves knowing the type of kufr and identifying who the disbelievers are—those who refrain from making takfeer of them or who express doubts about their disbelief.

Indeed, scholars (رحمه الله) have stated that the one who does not make takfeer of a kafir or who doubts their kufr has themselves disbelieved.

However, this judgement is not absolute; the matter has many nuances. Failing to learn the rulings regarding this nullifier can lead, due to misunderstanding, to unjustified takfeer.

- **LACK OF KNOWLEDGE:** A person may refrain from making takfeer of a disbeliever because they do not know the situation of that disbeliever.
- If someone is aware of the situation of the disbeliever yet still does not declare takfeer, they are judged based on the disbeliever they are reluctant to label as such, or about whom they express doubt regarding their disbelief

Disbelievers can be divided into two categories

THE FIRST: Kuffārun Asliyyūn

These are individuals who are not attributed to the Ummāh and have not uttered the shahādatayn, such as Yahūd, Nasārā, Majūs and others.

Anyone who does not make takfir on them or who doubts their disbelief has disbelieved themselves. Their disbelief is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah and is known by necessity in the religion of Islam. Thus, one who does not declare takfeer on these individuals is either denying the Qur'an and Sunnah or lacks knowledge of the foundations of Islam and its reality. Such a person's Islam is invalidated because they have neglected a pillar of the Shahāda, which is disbelief in Tāghūt.

Shaykh 'Abdullāh Abū Batīn (رحمه الله), said:

“The Muslims have agreed on the disbelief of anyone who does not declare the Jews and Christians as disbelievers, or who doubts their disbelief. And we are certain that most of them are ignorant.”¹

¹ Al-Durar al-Sunniyah (12/69)

THE SECOND: The disbeliever attributed to Islam

This category includes those who have uttered the Shahādatayn but have committed deeds that constitute kufr, which disqualify them from the domain of Islam. Their disbelief varies in clarity and concealment across different categories:

- Clear disbelief: This includes individuals whose disbelief is explicitly stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah, such as mushrikeen who worship others besides Allah. For these individuals, anyone who does not make takfeer falls into one of two categories:

1. Agreement with Disbelief: If they believe that the actions of these people are correct and agree with them, then they are considered disbelievers, even if they do not personally commit shirk. This is because they have validated and endorsed the act of shirk, which constitutes disbelief.

2. Acknowledgement but no takfeer: If they recognize these acts as disbelief and shirk but do not make takfeer, interpreting it through *ta'weel* and excusing them due to ignorance, then they do not disbelieve. However, this doubt of excusing them due to ignorance has been presented to them.

In this case, takfeer is not applied due to the doubt that has been presented. If the enforcement of *hudud* is withheld due to doubts, then it is even more appropriate to refrain from takfeer. A person whose Islam is certain does not leave it except with certainty, and *ta'weel* regarding their ignorance prevents takfeer until the relevant texts are explained to them, clarifying that there is no excuse in these matters. If they still refuse to make takfeer after this, then they have disbelieved.

Shaykh Sulaiman ibn Abdullah, (رحمه الله), said regarding those who do not declare polytheists as disbelievers:

“If he doubts their disbelief, or is ignorant of their disbelief, I would present to him the evidence from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) regarding their disbelief. If after that he still doubts or hesitates, then he is a disbeliever by the consensus of the scholars, for anyone who doubts the disbelief of a disbeliever is himself a disbeliever.”²

² Awthaq ‘Urā al-Īmān/ Majmū‘at al-Tawhīd (1/160)

Ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Abdul Lateef Al-Shaykh,

(رحمه الله), stated:

“Know that these actions are from the religion of ignorance, against which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was sent to deny, remove, and erase its traces. They are from major shirk, which the definitive verses have shown to be prohibited. These festivals resemble the festivals of ignorance. Whoever believes their permissibility and legitimacy, considering them acts of worship and religion, is among the most disbelieving and misguided of Allah’s creation. And whoever doubts their disbelief after the proof has been established against them is a disbeliever.”³

³ Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah (10/443)

- **Anticipated doubt:** Doubt may arise regarding takfeer for individuals such as rulers who govern by laws other than what Allah has revealed. Although their disbelief is certain for those who have researched the matter, a person who does not declare takfeer of them is not to be judged similarly, except after establishing the evidence and clarifying any doubts, ensuring that they understand Allah's ruling regarding these individuals.
- **Ijtihadi Issues:** The takfeer of a person whose status is subject to ijtiḥād and where there are differing opinions among Muslims, such as the verdict for someone who abandons *as-Salah* or similar matters. In such instances, a person who refrains from declaring takfeer against one who commits such actions is not made takfeer, nor are they deemed an innovator, as long as their fundamentals align with those of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.